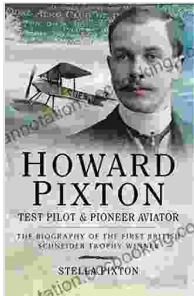


# Test Pilot Pioneer Aviator: The Extraordinary Story of Tony LeVier



## Howard Pixton: Test Pilot & Pioneer Aviator: The Biography of the First British Schneider Trophy Winner

by Robert D. Kaplan

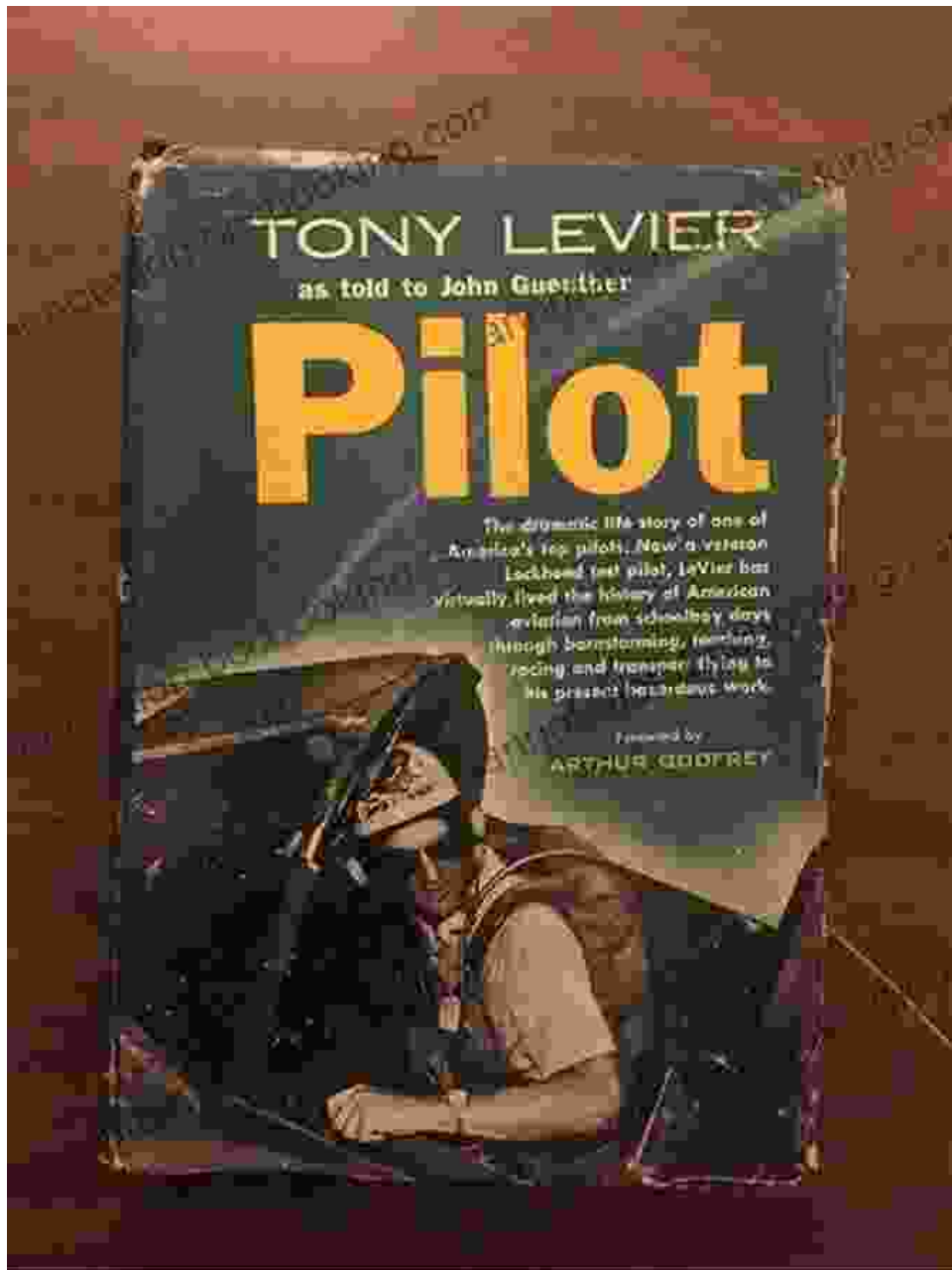
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Tony LeVier was one of the most influential test pilots in American aviation history. He flew over 200 different types of aircraft and logged more than 10,000 flight hours. LeVier made significant contributions to the development of many important aircraft, including the F-86 Sabre, the B-52 Stratofortress, and the SR-71 Blackbird. He was also a pioneer in the field

of aviation safety and helped to develop many of the safety procedures that are still used today.

## **Early Life and Career**

Tony LeVier was born in 1920 in Wausau, Wisconsin. He developed a passion for aviation at a young age and began flying model airplanes as a child. After graduating from high school, LeVier attended the University of Wisconsin, where he studied engineering. He also joined the university's flying club and began taking flying lessons.

In 1942, LeVier enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps. He was assigned to the 412th Fighter Group and flew P-47 Thunderbolts in combat over Europe. LeVier flew over 100 combat missions and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal.

## **Test Pilot Career**

After the war, LeVier returned to the United States and began working as a test pilot for Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation. He flew a variety of aircraft, including the XP-81, the XF-92, and the B-36 Peacemaker. In 1947, LeVier was hired by Lockheed Martin as a test pilot for the F-86 Sabre. The F-86 was a new jet fighter that was designed to compete with the Soviet MiG-15. LeVier played a key role in the development of the F-86 and helped to make it one of the most successful jet fighters of the Korean War.

After the Korean War, LeVier continued to work as a test pilot for Lockheed Martin. He flew a variety of aircraft, including the B-52 Stratofortress, the SR-71 Blackbird, and the F-117 Nighthawk. LeVier also made significant

contributions to the development of the Space Shuttle program. He flew the Space Shuttle Enterprise on its first test flight in 1977.

## **Aviation Safety Pioneer**

In addition to his work as a test pilot, LeVier was also a pioneer in the field of aviation safety. He helped to develop many of the safety procedures that are still used today. LeVier was a member of the National Transportation Safety Board and served as chairman of the board from 1977 to 1981. He also served as president of the International Society of Air Safety Investigators from 1983 to 1985.

## **Honors and Awards**

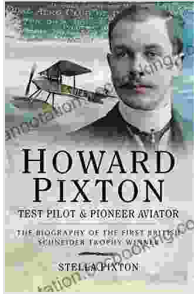
LeVier was recognized for his accomplishments with numerous awards and honors. He was inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame in 1985 and the International Air & Space Hall of Fame in 1990. LeVier was also awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2000. In 2003, the Tony LeVier Flight Test Museum was opened in O'Fallon, Missouri. The museum is dedicated to preserving the legacy of LeVier and other test pilots.

## **Legacy**

Tony LeVier was one of the most influential test pilots in American aviation history. He made significant contributions to the development of many important aircraft and helped to improve aviation safety. LeVier's legacy will continue to inspire future generations of aviators.

## **References**

\* National Aviation Hall of Fame \* International Air & Space Hall of Fame \*  
Presidential Medal of Freedom

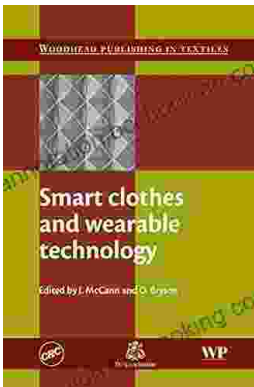


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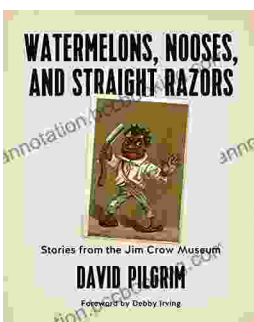
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